

Good afternoon Senator Handley, Representative Sayers and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee. I am here to express concerns about Senate Bill 666, An Act Concerning Safe Residential Treatment Facilities For Effective Recovery.

My name is Laurie Fresher and I am a person in sustained recovery. I am also employed by Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery, CCAR. I am the Senior Peer Services Coordinator for the newly opened Hartford Recovery Community Center. As part of my job I had the privilege of visiting over 100 Recovery Houses in Connecticut. This was part of the CCAR Recovery Housing Database project. We worked with DHMAS to survey Recovery Houses statewide to establish the first database of its kind in the state. You can search it by bed availability, location, insurance, rent, and what type of support it offers such as faith-based or 12 step, etc. I am truly amazed at the array of supports they offer. The supports go beyond just shelter, food and a safe environment. These homes provide a family atmosphere for folks to heal and continue to grow with other individuals who truly understand and work a program of recovery. They help build the foundation necessary to sustain recovery. They know the support systems first hand that will assist in this very critical stage of recovery. I can truly attest that the Owners and Manager go above and beyond the call of duty in operating these homes, which ultimately strength the community.

I receive calls everyday for folks looking for Recovery Housing and there still aren't enough beds for everyone especially in remote areas of the state. I have also lived in a Sober House; in fact that is how I came to know CCAR.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee on this extremely important issue. Please do not put in place a statute that may well jeopardize access to housing for people seeking recovery.